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Elaney Katsafanas Hasselmann

Public Information and Communications Manager, City of Salisbury

City Hall, 217 South Main Street, Salisbury, North Carolina 28144

Work Phone: (704) 638-4460 / Cell Phone: (704)762-1008

Information: <http://www.salisburync.gov>

Work Email Contact: [ehass@salisburync.gov](mailto:ehass@salisburync.gov)

## **Airport – A History of Collaboration and Partnership**

### **City of Salisbury Retains Future Interest in Airport through Reverter Clause**

Salisbury\_North Carolina\_February 22 – The joint venture that began as the Salisbury Municipal Airport and now known as the Rowan County Airport, includes an extensive history of collaboration and partnership, particularly between the City of Salisbury and Rowan County.

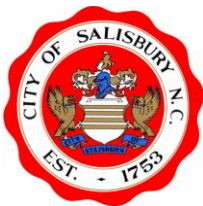
Initial efforts for the development of a municipal airport began on October 24, 1927 when the Salisbury City Council established a committee to work jointly with the Chamber of Commerce to secure an airport for Salisbury. The President of the Chamber of Commerce presented petitions from many business and civic organizations urging the City to acquire land for an airport. After discussion and consideration by the City Council, a motion was approved to purchase 125 acres situated three miles south of Salisbury and a short distance west of the state highway, for \$100 per acre. Rowan County helped the City by using their equipment to grade the land for the airport.

In late 1929, Council approved funds for the first hanger and in early 1930 approved funding for the installation of lights at the airport.

The airport was operated through 1933 by contract through North State Aviation and in 1934 the City Council adopted a resolution that a new Airport Commission would operate the Salisbury Municipal Airport. City Council gave the following directive to the Airport Commission - that it will at all times remain open in a manner which would allow aircraft equal rights of access in such a manner as would prevent a monopoly of passenger express and/or freight service.

In 1946, there was an effort to improve the Salisbury Municipal Airport by acquiring additional lands extending the runway and installing additional buildings and equipment. The improvements were to be paid for through a bond referendum, which subsequently failed.

Between 1955 and 1957, the City of Salisbury and Rowan County partnered to successfully improve the airport. \$200,000 in bonds were approved by City and County voters and were matched with federal funds.



The North Carolina General Assembly passed special legislation allowing the City of Salisbury to convey the airport to Rowan County without competitive bidding or advertisement. Upon passage, the City conveyed the airport to Rowan County and entered into an agreement on the joint operation of the airport. A nine member airport board was appointed by a joint action of the governing boards of both the City and the County.

The City retained a future interest in the airport based on this agreement and subsequent deed. Terms of this agreement conveyed approximately 158 acres and corresponding airport infrastructure to Rowan County. The agreement and corresponding deed outline that the land and premises would revert back to ownership by the City of Salisbury at a point which Rowan County ceases operations at the airport.

In 1964, the City and the County partnered on a track of land adjacent to the airport, in an effort to create a landfill.

In 1977, City Council approved \$41,953 to assist with the construction of a new National Guard Armory adjacent to the airport. Council indicated it was morally obligated to participate and felt something in return would be gained.

In late 1989, City Council approved the first water and sewer extension agreement and subsequently awarded a contract in the amount \$109,957.

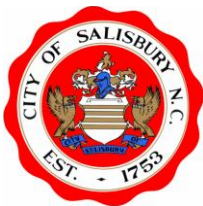
In 1990, the City Council and Rowan County Board of Commissioners convened for a joint meeting. One discussion item was annexation of the airport by the City of Salisbury and information presented by City staff.

In 1993, City Council approved a water and sewer extension agreement to serve the Food Lion Corporate hanger and the City agreed to participate at 50% for an amount of \$37,200. Also in 1993, City Council approved a water and sewer extension along Airport Loop Road for \$30,222.

In late 1994, City Council reviewed a Systematic Annexation Plan that included the airport area as an area under consideration for future annexation. In 1996, Council approved a water and sewer extension to serve the National Guard and the federal government paid for the full amount of the extension.

In 1997, the City approved a water and sewer extension for Rack Room Shoes and funded 50% of the cost for an amount of \$140,000. In addition, they also approved a water and sewer extension to serve the National Guard Flight Center in the amount of \$119,612 and a Standard Aero hanger for \$113,300.

In 2001, City Council donated 1.69 acres of Airport Road and Airport Loop Road for use as part of the airport property. Mayor Susan W. Kluttz stated that one of the City's goals was City and County cooperation and because the County had worked so well with the City, she moved to donate the land to Rowan County at no cost.



Almost 15 years after outlining the airport for potential annexation, the City adopted an ordinance to annex a portion of the airport in 2004. A public hearing was held on proposed annexation of the airport area and five speakers addressed City Council.

In 2005, the City of Salisbury supported Rowan County by approving an Airport Zoning Overlay that Rowan County requested. Furthermore, City Council donated a retired fire truck to Rowan County for use at the airport.

From 2006 to 2009, City Council outlined a goal that encouraged growth at the airport by creating an Airport Development Zone. City and County officials worked together to create an Airport Development Zone that resulted in the lowest tax rate of any airport in the region located on the I-77/I-85 corridor. The agreement passed by the City and the County also created an Airport Development Fund to facilitate future airport investments. The 2009 agreement was signed by Salisbury Mayor Susan Kluttz and Rowan County Commission Chairman Carl Ford.

Also in 2009, City Council designated the airport as an urban progress zone which allowed eligibility for tax credits.

From 2009 onward, the national recession impacted the City of Salisbury, Rowan County and correspondingly business and revenue at the airport.

However, in 2012, the County began discussions with the City about assisting with costs for a new airport hangar. County Manager Gary Page met with both City Manager Doug Paris and Salisbury Rowan Utility Director Jim Behmer about assisting with water and sewer extensions to the hangar at an estimated cost of \$96,000. The County requested that the City assist with the extension by using City forces and equipment for construction. The design is currently being finalized and permitting will be expedited by the City of Salisbury's One Stop Shop for Development Services. Funds from the Airport Development Fund created in 2009, will go toward the cost of the extension.

In 2013, the City Council offered the services of a staff engineer who specializes in airport construction to help oversee future projects, including runway and hangar construction. Further, the City offered to assist in procuring Brownfields grant funds to help remediate the property needed for a runway extension.

The Salisbury City Council wishes to continue this longstanding history of partnership and collaboration regarding the Rowan County Airport. The City will develop an Airport Improvement Plan that will be presented at a joint meeting with local delegation members during the month of March.

This history was prepared from the official minutes of the Salisbury City Council and from supporting documents, including corresponding agreements and deeds.



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